

Amendments to the Drawings:

The attached replacement drawing sheet makes changes to Fig. 2 and replaces the original sheet with Fig. 2.

Attachment: Replacement Sheet

REMARKS

Claims 1-22 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, Fig. 2 is amended to overcome a drawing objection. No new matter is added by this Amendment.

Entry of the amendments is proper under 37 CFR §1.116 since the amendments:

(a) place the application in condition for allowance (for the reasons discussed herein); (b) do not raise any new issue requiring further search and/or consideration (as the amendment to the drawings is in response to a drawing objection); (c) satisfy a requirement of form asserted in the previous Office Action; (d) do not present any additional claims without canceling a corresponding number of finally rejected claims; and (e) place the application in better form for appeal, should an appeal be necessary. The amendments are necessary and were not earlier presented because they are made in response to objections raised in the final rejection. Entry of the amendments is thus respectfully requested.

I. Drawing Objection

Fig. 2 was objected to as allegedly misspelling a word. Applicants have amended Fig. 2 to properly spell "Searcher." Applicants submit that this objection is now moot. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are thus respectfully requested.

II. Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

A. Smith in view of Thorne

Claims 1-11 and 17-22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,785,015 ("Smith") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,832,191 ("Thorne"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Patent Office alleges that Smith teaches all of the features recited in claims 1-11 and 17-22 except for the search section for searching the output printing apparatus group managed by the managing section for one candidate output printing apparatus or a plurality of candidate output printing apparatuses in response to a search request having search conditions

from a terminal apparatus, as required in claims 1, 5, 17 and 19-22. The Patent Office alleges that Thorne teaches this feature. Applicants respectfully disagree.

Smith teaches a computer system that includes workstations and peripherals having a processor, such as a printer, that are in communication with each other via electronic mail over a network. Electronic mail messages include commands and requests that control access to status and reconfiguration of the peripheral, establish subscriptions to status of the peripheral, and invoke reconfiguration of the peripheral. See the Abstract of Smith. In other words, Smith teaches that a user at a workstation can control access to, reconfigure, and establish subscriptions to a peripheral, such as a printer.

Claims 1, 5, 17 and 19-21 require (1) managing mail addresses for each output printing apparatus of an output printing apparatus group; (2) searching the output printing apparatus group managed by the managing section for one or a plurality of candidate output printing apparatus(es) in response to a search request having search conditions from a terminal apparatus; (3) notifying the terminal apparatus of the mail address of said candidate or the plurality of candidate output printing apparatus(es) found in a search by the search section; (4) the terminal apparatus issues an electronic mail to a destination mail address of a designated output printing apparatus; (5) the destination mail address is based upon the mail address of the candidate or plurality of candidate output printing apparatus(es) provided by the notifying section; (6) distinguishing the designated output printing apparatus based on the destination mail address of the electronic mail issued from said terminal apparatus; and (7) the designated output printing apparatus produces printed output of outputting information included in the electronic mail issued from the terminal apparatus.

As acknowledged by the Patent Office, Smith does not teach or suggest a search section that searches an output printing apparatus group managed by the managing section for one or a plurality of candidate output printing apparatus(es) in response to a search request

having search conditions from a terminal apparatus. The term "search conditions" has a particular meaning in the present application. In particular, "search conditions" refers to conditions such as "color print is possible," "double surface print is possible," "the printer is installed in Tokyo," "the printer is within a certain distance from a present location of the terminal apparatus," and the like. See page 24, lines 19-24 of the specification. The notifying section then notifies the terminal apparatus of the mail address of the candidate or the plurality of candidate output printing apparatus(es) found in the search by the search section that meet the condition(s) requested by the terminal apparatus.

Thus, Applicants submit that Smith does not teach or suggest that (1) a terminal apparatus requests a search of an output printing apparatus group for a candidate or a plurality of candidate output printing apparatus(es) having specific conditions, (2) the search section searches the output printing apparatus group for any printing apparatus(es) that meet these search conditions, and (3) a notifying section notifies the terminal apparatus of the mail address of any printing apparatus that meets all of the search conditions.

Applicants further submit that Thorne does not remedy any of the deficiencies of Smith. As discussed at length in previous communications with the Patent Office, Thorne teaches that when a server receives a printer request from a client/processor, the server causes a search to be made for all printers on the network. See column 4, lines 40-42 of Thorne. A list of all available printers is then provided to the client/processor, and the user must then select one printer for a print job. See column 4, lines 43-46 of Thorne.

In other words, Thorne does not teach or suggest a search section for searching the output printing apparatus group managed by the managing section in response to a search request having search conditions from a terminal apparatus. Instead, Thorne teaches that the server causes a search to be made of a service registry database, and a list of all printers and their capabilities is then provided to the client/processor, where the user is able to select one

printer. See column 4, lines 43-46 of Thorne. In other words, Thorne teaches that the client/processor is provided with a listing of all available printers, not a listing of printers based upon search conditions as recited in claim 1. A user must himself sort through the information on all of the printers on the network and select a suitable printer to use. The list returned in Thorne may likely include printers that are not suitable for printing the required job, but are nevertheless included in the list in Thorne because they are on the network.

Although the Patent Office alleges that claim 3 of Thorne requires a search of communication data structure (CDS (58)) to be made to determine which printers are available and match a client processor's print request requirements, Thorne does not teach or suggest what these requirements may be. Thorne teaches that CDS includes the name of the associated agent data structure; the address of new printer and any route information required to reach new printer; data to enable communication with print services manager (PSM); and further data which enables access to other procedures within a program memory section, e.g., network interface/communication procedure, managed objects database (MOD) update procedure and status update procedure. See column 4, lines 14-22 of Thorne. Applicants submit that these requirements are far different from the search conditions required in the present claims.

Moreover, Applicants submit that one of ordinary skill in the art would not have combined the teachings of Smith and Thorne. Smith is directed to controlling access to status and reconfiguration of a peripheral, establishing subscriptions to the status of the peripheral and invoking reconfiguration of the peripheral. All of the peripherals are known in Smith and there is thus no need for searching an output apparatus group for a candidate output printing apparatus, as allegedly taught by Thorne.

The Patent Office further alleges that the heart of the present application is to provide a list or a table of the printers' e-mail addresses for the user to search and to select an

available printer based on its e-mail address. See page 6 of the Office Action. Applicants strongly disagree with the Patent Office's summation of the present application. One of the objectives of the present application is for a terminal apparatus to search an entire group for one or a plurality of output apparatus(es) that meet requested search conditions. Such search conditions, as explained above, may include conditions such as color print is possible, double surface print is possible, the printer is installed in a specific location, the printer is within a certain distance from a present location of the terminal apparatus, and the like.

In addition, the information output system may also include an accounting processor for performing accounting processing before outputting the information included in the electronic mail. Thus, the information output system may be capable of billing the user at the terminal apparatus for the outputting of the information included in the electronic mail. None of these features are taught or suggested by Smith and/or Thorne.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicants submit that Smith and/or Thorne do not teach or suggest all of the features recited in claims 1-11 and 17-22. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are thus respectfully requested.

B. Smith and Thorne and further in view of Rudy

Claims 12 and 13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Smith and Thorne, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,360,252 ("Rudy").* This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Rudy does not remedy the deficiencies of Smith and/or Thorne. As explained, these references, in combination or alone, do not teach or suggest an information output system

* The Office Action indicates that claims 12 and 13 are rejected relying upon Smith and Thorne, and U.S. Patent No. 6,369,252. However, U.S. Patent No. 6,369,252 is directed to completely different subject matter. Applicants thus contacted Examiner Nguyen regarding this error on January 19, 2006. The Examiner indicated that this was a typographical error and the rejection is relying upon U.S. Patent No. 6,360,252 to Rudy.

comprising a printer group, a managing section, a search section, an address notifying section, a second server group including a receiving section and a distinguishing section and a converting section as recited in claim 5. The allegedly well known feature of checking for a virus in an e-mail would not have suggested the overall system recited in claims 5, 12 and 13.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicants submit that Smith, Thorne and/or Rudy do not teach or suggest all of the features recited in claims 12 and 13. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are thus respectfully requested.

C. Smith and Thorne and further in view of the allegedly well-known feature of checking for a virus in an electronic mail

Claims 14-16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Smith and Thorne, and further in view of the allegedly well-known feature of checking for a virus in an electronic mail. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The allegedly well-known feature of checking for a virus in an e-mail does not remedy the deficiencies of Smith and/or Thorne. As explained, these references, in combination or alone, do not teach or suggest an information output system comprising a printer group, a managing section, a search section, an address notifying section, a second server group including a receiving section and a distinguishing section and a converting section as recited in claim 5. The allegedly well-known feature of checking for a virus in an e-mail would not have suggested the overall system recited in claims 5 and 14-16.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicants submit that Smith, Thorne and/or the allegedly well-known feature of checking for a virus in an e-mail do not teach or suggest all of the features recited in claims 14-16. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are thus respectfully requested.

III. Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §102(a) or, in the alternative under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 1-22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(a) as allegedly being anticipated by, or in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being obvious over, "PhaserLink Remote Internet Printing Software" User Manual by Tektronix ("PhaserLink"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Patent Office alleges that Sections 2-5 of PhaserLink teach or suggest all of the features recited in claims 1-22. Applicants respectfully disagree. Applicants submit that PhaserLink merely teaches the method of installing and using a specific printing software.

PhaserLink does not teach or suggest (1) that a terminal apparatus causes a search including search conditions to be made of an output printing apparatus group managed by a managing section for a specific printing apparatus that meets the requested search conditions, or (2) that a notifying section notifies the terminal apparatus of the specific printing apparatus(es) that meet the requested search condition, as required in the present claims. PhaserLink merely teaches how to install printers so users can send print jobs to remote printers over the internet. PhaserLink does not teach or suggest that a search including search conditions is conducted based upon a request made by the terminal apparatus.

The Patent Office again alleges that the heart of the present application is to provide a list or a table of the printers' e-mail addresses for the user to search and to select an available printer based on its e-mail address. As explained in detail above, Applicants strongly disagree with this allegation.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicants submit that PhaserLink does not teach or suggest all of the features recited in claims 1-22. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are thus respectfully requested.

IV. Rudy


As discussed earlier herein, Rudy is relied upon, but has not been properly made of record. The Patent Office Form 892 included with the Office Action failed to list this reference, instead listing U.S. Patent No. 6,306,252 to Ryham. Accordingly, so that Rudy is properly listed of record, submitted herewith is a Form 1449 listing U.S. Patent No. 6,360,252 to Rudy. Applicants respectfully request that the Patent Office sign and initial the Form 1449.

V. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-22 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



James A. Oliff
Registration No. 27,075

Leana Levin
Registration No. 51,939

JAO:LL/lxl

Attachment:
Replacement Drawing Sheet

Date: March 7, 2006

OLIFF & BERRIDGE, PLC
P.O. Box 19928
Alexandria, Virginia 22320
Telephone: (703) 836-6400

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